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DEVICES AND ACCESSORY AIDS IN THE FIRST YEAR OF SPANISH

(A paper presented in the Spanish Round Table Conference of the Modern Language Section, Pittsburgh meeting of the National Education Association, July, 1918.)

In the work of vocabulary building, which we all begin by the use of objects in the class-room, I have found it helpful during the first few days to use the following device: After the pupils have acquired their vocabulary orally, they attach to the objects name-cards large enough to be seen across the room. For about two weeks they enjoy this game. I keep the doors of the room placarded "ENTRADA" and "SALIDA."

A vocabulary is quickest gained by concert work. Each little answer or group of answers given by the individual is repeated by the class in concert, the teacher at first speaking *with* the class. By repeating the sentence with the class the teacher sets the pace and controls the rhythm, the class quickly catches her intonation and phrasing, and this in no way prevents her from being able to detect the mispronounced or incorrect word. If she cannot tell which pupil makes the mistake, the class, by their amused glances at the offender, will save any interruption of the work. Moreover, when the teacher repeats the phrases with the pupils, her voice is the greatest factor in keeping the class interested.

In working outward from the room by means of objects which can be brought in, make a collection of pictures to illustrate the series you are building up. I began last year a series of charts to illustrate Méras and Roth's list. I also made a chart of the vowel triangle. After one begins in this line, it is surprising to see how one sees good illustrations at every turn.

Not being able to buy a game of "Authors" in Spanish, I made one which teaches the names of authors and their works. As a reward for exceptional work, pupils may play this game.

Teach objectively the parts of the body. And right here is a good place to begin teaching numbers. Home-room numbers may be given in Spanish. Pupils like to bring in the numbers of their automobile licenses, or the highest they have seen. And in connec-

tion with numbers have a Spanish calendar. For a time I begin each lesson by asking, while the attendance slip is being made out, the day of the month, the day of the week, and the weather, sometimes giving, as a reward, the calendar sheet just torn off. They like to have such little things to show their friends.

I begin during the second or third week to have pupils work out groups of words, synonyms, adjectives, adverbs, phrases, and so on—Méras' list again. I also group contrasting words and phrases. Sometimes I put a time limit on lists, having pupils raise hands as soon as they have ten or fifteen words, or calling time in five minutes and having the lists read.

Idiom lists grouped according to verbs are worked out in notebooks, in which are placed also stenciled or drawn maps filled in by the pupils, little themes illustrated by pictures—all sorts of material collected by the pupils.

The pupils like to have spelling and vocabulary matches, and in these matches the lazy student shows to such disadvantage that usually he is moved to study his vocabularies with greater zeal, and the dull pupil is stimulated to attacking with more real concentration the problem of acquiring words.

In the *grammar drill* one should make the most extensive use of concert work. And since grammar is drill, drill, drill, let's have the pupils enjoy it. Many teachers say they cannot do concert work with their classes. Just try it again next year. If you work *with* the pupils at first, show them how to do it—lead them. They will soon gain confidence and will keep absolutely together. Use concert work in drilling on type sentences. Use it in correcting errors in recitations, going back to the individual after the concert work. I use it in quick conjugation of verbs with objects or adverbs, or personal pronouns.

I have found it a good plan to conjugate the verbs with personal pronouns, systematically going through the whole series. (I give it to you, I give it to him, to her, to you, to them; he gives it to me, to you, etc.) and so on through the different persons, numbers, and tenses of the different verbs; skipping around should only come after much systematic drill.

For review work, pupils are sent to the board with slips on which are written several connected sentences of practical value or vital interest to the pupil, all based on the review principles. Mean-

while the class is doing other drill work. When each has finished she will be seen back at her desk diligently looking up principles in her grammar. When all are in their seats the work is corrected with nice red chalk, each pupil being first given the opportunity to correct her own work if she can. As the correcting proceeds, the principles are discussed. They enjoy this, and the whole class rejoices when there is not even a red accent mark and the pupil may write O.K. They like to keep a record of O.K.'s and compare with their previous records and the records of other divisions.

Reading.

After the pupils are furnished a book it is my practice at the beginning of the period to read a few sentences myself and then have the class read them in concert. Nearly always at the first reading of the paragraph I read with them, thus setting the pace and keeping the rhythm. Soon the naturally good readers will be taking the hesitating, self-conscious ones along, and they are all getting the swing of it. My pupils think this a most helpful exercise.

Sometimes I have a pupil read while the class notes the errors. We drill on those errors, first in concert, then back to the individual who made the error. To vary the work and to test preparation and power, the paragraph may be read with changes of person, number, and tense.

Seldom is it necessary to have direct translation from Spanish to English. Well-directed questions will always show if the subject is clearly understood.

I have the pupils look up the questions given in the text in many readers. Soon they find out that the questions are not comprehensive enough. They notice that I always make the connection between the matter of the text and their daily life and that the questions in the text usually do not. When I say, "Don't you think you could make better questions?" they next day bring in a set of questions on the lesson. We talk them over, and for the following day I assign the two most self-confident pupils to be teachers for that part of the lesson. This is absolutely the most helpful thing I've ever done with a class. When that pupil-teacher finds that the class can *not* understand her question, she realizes that it is not all due to the "fussiness" of her teacher. They like to do this exercise. They like to extend the questions to include their own experience, to compare the length of the term of the president of a South American

country with that of one of the United States. They like to make connection with their geography and history.

And right here I want to make a plea for the intelligent use of South American and Central American reading material, even in the first-year work, and correlating with history and geography. Many of the little readers like the Roessler and Remy's have interesting little articles on the life of South American countries. The pupils enjoy working out in Spanish on the map the boundaries, the climate and products, and tracing the connections between the two, comparing the populations and governments with those of the United States. Most teachers I have met do not like this work, are bored, so the pupils are bored too. Really, it *is* interesting, once you're really in it. And from the *Mentor*, the *Geographic*, and the *Pan-American Union Bulletin* can be obtained many pictures for illustration.

During the last three months of the first year pupils come to the Spanish class-room during their spare periods. They find in a certain place on the table reading material, school editions of short stories, easy magazine articles, clippings from Spanish newspapers, and some pupils plan to spend at least one period a week there. By arrangement with our public library, I keep there a collection of travel books, Bensusan's *Home Life in Spain*, Fitz-Gerald's *Rambles in Spain*, and so on.

Composition.

When the pupil goes to the board for written work he writes his name like this, "Me llamo Juan Smith," thus fixing that point in his mind. On his papers he also always writes the date in Spanish.

Sentence work from English to Spanish from the text is brought to the class and collected. The teacher reads the English sentence. Some pupil gives it in Spanish. If it is incorrect others are called upon until the correct form is obtained. The pupil who gives the sentence correctly writes it on the board. The whole list of sentences is gone through and variants are given. Pupils find that each sentence has one or two important points—reasons for the use of that sentence form in the exercise, and they learn to look first for those important points. They enjoy this exercise with its lively discussions.

They like also Mr. Wilkins' "At the Window" exercise. A pupil goes to the window and names all the objects he can see. Some-

times as he gives them another pupil writes them on the board. When his vocabulary is exhausted another takes his place. Finally the whole class goes to the window to see who can get the longest list. Occasionally I put up a collection of pictures by Murillo, pages from that excellent catalogue of the Zuloaga exhibition. Even the first-year classes can talk about them.

We have had conversation on many Liberty Loan posters, and in connection with the drawing pupils have designed Liberty Bond posters, illustrated with Christ of the Andes, and Columbus's ship. They have illustrated proverbs for decoration of the class-room.

When pupils enter the Spanish class-room they look at a regular place on the board for special work, such as jokes or anecdotes from newspapers and magazines, which those arriving in the room first usually may work out before the pupils from more distant parts of the building arrive at their seats.

The classes have enjoyed greatly learning Spanish songs. De Gogorza's record of "Noche Serena" was played on my little phonograph at different times until the pupils began to know the melody and most of the words. Then the words were written on the board, discussed and drilled. After listening again to the record while thinking through the words, the song was sung with the record several times, then without—and the song was learned.

I am trying to collect music and records illustrating the folk songs and dances of several provinces in Spain.

Pupils will themselves speed up the slow or dull pupil in order to have time for an extra record or song on Friday.

The *memorizing* of poems and prose is begun at the end of the first month or so. A poem, the first a very short one, is read several times by the teacher, translated by the class, order of ideas presented in the poem discussed, also the importance of the words in phrasing. Again the poem is read by the teacher several times, phrases or words drilled if necessary, then read in concert *with* the teacher. By the time all this is done the pupils almost know a short poem, and have begun to love it, for they feel they are really expressing its ideas. They themselves can tell immediately if any pupil is mispronouncing a word, stressing the wrong word, or failing to get the rhythm. It is only after much concert work that I ask individual pupils to give the poem. They all love this work, and I often hear them in their home rooms or in the gymnasium singing their songs or reciting poems or proverbs.

Playlets may be given during the last weeks of the first year. As soon as Ruth Henry's little book of playlets came out last November I had two of the little plays given by second year or third term pupils, and thought they were doing remarkably well. Then I wanted to see if second term (first year) pupils could do it too, so I tried it out in June. Ten days after assigning the parts a rehearsal of *El Criado Astuto* was given with a success that was far beyond my wildest dreams. First year pupils also enjoy dramatizing the little stories in their readers. This year my second term pupils have dramatized several in the Roessler and Remy.

Even during the year the war broke out I brought home quite a bit of illustrative material from Spain, pottery, jewelry, castanets, fans, street car zone tickets, admission tickets to museums and bull fights, kilometric tickets, and a sprig of myrtle from the Court of the Myrtles in the Alhambra.

We have on our table in the class-room newspapers, magazines, maps, calendars, postcards (mine are in envelopes according to the grammar and reading lessons, so that they are readily available), and all the illustrative material we can find.

We collect pictures from advertisements, magazines, Bulletins of the Pan-American Union, book publishers' advertisements, etc. The pupils, once started on the track of such things, bring in loads of such material.

All of these devices and more have been used in my first year classes this year. Does it look like a lot of work? It really is not. One year when I was teaching thirty hours a week (every period of the day), I was forced to work out a scheme for the rapid correction of quiz papers, which I will not take time to describe here, as it was published in *Modern Language Journal* for October, 1917.

And, after all, any device is only a means of attacking a problem from a different angle. After one finds there is a different angle, one becomes interested in still other angles, in *how many* angles.

But in the use of devices let us appeal to all the senses, let us keep clearly in mind the underlying principles, let us maintain a reasonable relation in the different phases of our work—in other words, a "*balanced ration*."

ISABELLE M. DAY